(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the details of Government's policy in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) It has been experienced that inspite of the quantitative growth, the cooperative sector is beset with several constraints related to resource availability, institutional inadequacies, erosion of the democratic content in management, poor infrastructure etc. Due to these constraints, the cooperative institutions generally are not in a position to avail optimum advantages of open and globalised economy and to contribute due share in national economy looking to their voluminous size and vast network spread over throughout the country. Some of basic reasons for such state of affairs of cooperatives have been; lack of members' awareness, lack of professional management, excessive Government controls and lack of appropriate legislative and policy framework etc.

(c) To address these issues, Government of India has enunciated a National Policy on Cooperatives to ensure autonomy, lasting viability of cooperatives and that they work as professionally and democratically managed institutions accountable to their members. Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002 has been enacted with effect from 19th August, 2002 which empowers the Multi-State Cooperative Societies to work as professionally and democratically managed bodies with active participation of members. It is envisaged that the Act of 2002 will provide a guiding legislative framework for reforms in State legislations.

Further, on the basis of the recommendations of the Vaidyanathan Committee, the Government has approved a Revival Package for Short Term Cooperative Credit Structure (STCCS). Revival Package envisages an outlay of Rs. 13,597 crore for recapitalisation of STCCS. So far, 25 States have signed the MOU with Government of India and NABARD. An amount of Rs. 6072.71 crore has been released by NABARD as Government of India share for recapitalization of 37,599 PACS in ten States, while the State Governments have released Rs. 608.13 crore as their share.

Under the Central Sector Scheme for Cooperative Education and Training, Government has been giving grant for implementing Cooperative Education and Training in the country. Government also implements its cooperative development programmes through National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC). The programmes/schemes being implemented through NCDC are (i) Integrated Cooperative Development Projects in selected districts (ii) assistance to cooperative marketing, processing and storage etc. programmes in cooperatively under-developed/least developed states/union territories, and (iii) share capital participation in growers'/weavers' cooperative spinning mills.

Toll free number for farmers

2277. SHRIMATI T. RATNA BAI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is implementing any toll free number to give guidance to farmers;

(b) if so, the details thereof especially for the farmers of Andhra Pradesh; and

(c) if not, by when such proposal would be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India has a toll free number "1800-180-1551" to provide guidance to farmers under Kisan Call Centres (KCC) Scheme. The earlier toll free number "1551" has been changed to the new number to enable fanners to access KCC through landline and mobile network of both public and private telephone service providing agencies. The Kisan Call Centres is functioning since 21st January, 2004. At present the Call Centres are located in 25 different locations of the country covering all the States/UTs including Andhra Pradesh.

KCC provides guidance to farmers in local dialects on all aspects of agriculture and allied subjects. KCC Services are accessible through all telephone networks from 6 A.M. To 10 P.M. on all seven days of the week.

As regards the Kisan Call Centre of Andhra Pradesh State, the Call Centre is located in Hyderabad. KCC Hyderabad received 1,07,528 calls from inception till June, 2009.

The National Institute of Agriculture Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad is the Nodal Agency for monitoring the day to day functioning of the KCC in the State. State Level Monitoring Committee (SLMC) under the chairmanship of Secretary (Agriculture), Government of Andhra Pradesh, coordinates and resolves the operational issues of KCC in Andhra Pradesh.

(c) Does not arise, as the toll-free number is already in operation.

Bilateral co-operation with other countries in various fields related to agriculture

2278. DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has signed MOUs to promote bilateral cooperation through knowledge exchange on emerging technologies, agricultural marketing and animal development with different countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the kind of co-operation Indian agriculture is having in various fields like research and marketing; and

(d) how India stands to benefit in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Pursuit of International Cooperation is guided by the national interest in the field of agriculture and allied activities. The thrust of international cooperation is to further strengthen Indian agriculture through cooperation in areas in which the countries have niche strengths. India has signed